



# Two Common Concerns About Trails

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Well-designed and well-maintained corridor trails create high-quality user experiences. Equally important, they provide significant public benefits for community development and health as well as local economic activity and property tax base. Neighbors often wonder whether new trails projects will be beneficial. Here are two issues they worry about:

## 1. Trails lower property values

~ John L. Crompton, 2004, *The Proximate Principle: Impact of Parks, Open Space and Water Features on Residential Property Values and the Property Tax Base*, reviews the research and finds that greenway trails have no negative impact on either saleability of property or its value. Nationwide, studies indicate that access to trails may improve a property's attractiveness to buyers, and there is anecdotal evidence to support this in the Flagstaff area.

### Properties Near Bike Trails Draw Buyers

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, Nancy Keates (08/22/2008)

Thanks in part to high gas prices, buyers are keenly interested in homes that are in close proximity to bike trails, according to reports from real estate practitioners in bicycle-friendly areas. Craig Della Penna, an associate with Murphys Realtors Inc. in Northampton, Mass., estimates that half of his 18 closings last year came from emphasizing homes near bike trails...

## 2. Trails increase neighborhood crime

~ Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, *1998 Rail-Trails and Safe Communities: the Experience on 372 Trails* compares the incidence minor and major crimes using FBI crime reports for 1995. Nationally, trails were extremely safe environments for major crimes (mugging, assault, forcible rape, or murder). Such crimes are hundreds of times less likely to occur on rail-trails than in the larger urban, suburban, or rural setting. Similarly, burglary, classified as a minor crime, was extremely uncommon. Other minor crimes (trespassing, graffiti, littering, sign damage, and motorized use) were reported as a percent of trails participating in the survey. Here, between 3-26% of rail-trails experienced minor crimes. Graffiti was the most common minor crime in urban settings (26%). In suburban and rural settings, the most frequent minor crime was littering (24%).